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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001297

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2017
TAGS: [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: ABBAS SPEECH TO PLO CENTRAL COUNCIL AND REACTION

REF: A) JERUSALEM 01283 B) GMP20070621620001

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: President Abbas's speech to the PLO Central Council on June 20 condemned HAMAS's actions in the Gaza Strip in unambiguous terms and called for a revival of the PLO without HAMAS. Consulate contacts expressed support for the clear direction that Abbas offered in spite of continued apprehension about the situation in Gaza. PLC member Sabella emphasized the need for sustained action to prove to Palestinians that Abbas can make improvements in daily life and the political situation. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) addressed the PLO Central Council (PLO-CC) on June 20 condemning HAMAS for its take-over of the Gaza Strip and rejecting any dialogue with HAMAS. (Full text of speech at ref B.) Abbas criticized HAMAS for committing crimes against the Palestinian people, and referred to HAMAS as "coupists", "murderous terrorists", and "Takfiris". (NOTE: Takfiri is a term used to describe Islamic extremists such as al-Qaeda. END NOTE.) Abbas accused HAMAS of attempting to assassinate him, described the current conflict as one between nationalists and militias, and called for the dissolution of the HAMAS Executive Force (EF). Abbas also called for a reactivation of the PLO, to include all Palestinian factions with the exception of HAMAS.

¶3. (C) West Bank Palestinian contacts have welcomed the speech. Majdi Khaldi, former MFA official now working in President Abbas's office, told PolOff that the speech effectively emphasized that HAMAS's self-proclaimed government is illegal and illegitimate, and drove home the point that Salam Fayyad's cabinet is the only Palestinian government. Nizar Farsakh, a member of the PLO Negotiations Support Unit (NSU), said Palestinians are grateful that Abbas gave the Palestinian Authority (PA) a clear direction. He said the issue of whether Abbas violated the Basic Law by forming a new government that is not endorsed by the PLC is less important to Palestinians than seeing movement on political and security issues. He added that the leftist parties also agree with Abbas's speech, which could place HAMAS in a more difficult political position.

¶4. (SBU) Jerusalem Fatah PLC member Bernard Sabella said he is cautiously optimistic after the speech, noting the need for follow-up to undermine HAMAS's support without appearing to bully Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. He said the speech leaves no doubt about Abbas's position. Although all Palestinians are upset with HAMAS's actions, some West Bankers and Gazans blame the international restrictions for driving HAMAS to desperate action, according to Sabella. He said near-term Israeli confidence-building measures will weaken sympathy for HAMAS, and Abbas could increase his support by introducing new leadership into Palestinian organizations. Sabella warned that overwhelming U.S. backing for Abbas will undercut his popularity if Palestinians perceive the U.S. as supporting a favorite leader rather than

supporting a democratic process.
WALLES